
Lessons in understanding Montreal heritage language contexts: Whose literacies and voices are privileged?

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Résumé

In this article, I focus on six lessons learned from qualitative, ethnographic inquiries in Montreal Heritage language contexts, which challenge traditional representations of 'language minority' communities and identities. Through examples of multilingual children's identity accounts, I argue for the need to recognize heritage literacies in academic discourse about multiple literacies and in mainstream inquiries. They signal the need for policy makers and educators to rethink assumptions about whose literacies are privileged, recognized and valued in particular contexts, increased funding for local Heritage Literacies, and dialogue among policy makers, educators and communities.

Résumé

Cet article présente six leçons tirées d'enquêtes qualitatives et ethnographiques sur différents contextes de langue d'origine à Montréal et qui remettent en question les conceptions traditionnelles de communauté linguistique minoritaire et d'identité culturelle. En me basant sur des témoignages d'enfants à identité plurilingue, je mets en évidence le besoin de reconnaître les littératies de langue d'origine dans le discours universitaire sur la plurilittératie ainsi que dans le cadre d'enquêtes générales. De plus, ces témoignages soulignent la nécessité pour les décideurs et les éducateurs de revoir leurs hypothèses sur les littératies à privilégier, considérer et valoriser dans des contextes particuliers. Il faudrait que ces acteurs assurent l'augmentation du financement des programmes locaux de littératies en langues d'origine et le dialogue entre les décideurs, les éducateurs et les communautés.

Ways of looking: Moving beyond mainstream literacies

In this increasingly diverse, multicultural/multilingual millennium, concepts such as literacies, communities and spaces evoke complex, multiple interpretations, provoke new challenges for language educators and policy makers. They signal the need for rethinking our assumptions and developing new ways

of thinking about literacy and whose literacies are privileged, recognized and valued. In 2009, Montreal is a North American urban city with the highest number of trilingual speakers, increasing multilingualism among students in its urban school and community spaces, and has the highest level of continuity, retention of languages other than dominant mainstream languages (Chinese, Greek, Italian, Armenian) and those of the founding nations, English and French. Multilingualism in Montreal is an unanticipated consequence of Quebec's language legislation, Bill 101. Many link shifting language ideologies to the 1970's (Breton, 1991; Taylor, 1994). The shift in language ideologies in Canadian public discourse is often attributed to several policy acts and documents: Canadian Official Languages Act of 1969, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of 1972, Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1981, and 1988 Heritage Language Act. These policy documents theoretically opened up possibilities for linguistic and cultural pluralism. The Heritage Language Act, a move beyond the neo liberal agenda and rhetoric of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism, promoted a discourse of multiculturalism as an option to preserving heritage languages and responding to diversity within Canada and Quebec. However, Montreal heritage language communities are polymorphous phenomena with historically diverse organizational styles, structures, complex identity politics, literacy practices and trajectories dating back to the nineteenth century (Breton, 1991; Bourhis, 2001; Labrie and Churchill, 1996). So what are we to conclude from these policies and realities?

In this article, I focus on six lessons learned from several funded studies in Montreal Heritage language contexts, which challenge essentializing representations of "language minority" communities and identities. Through examples of multilingual children's identity accounts, I argue for the need to recognize heritage language literacies in academic discourse about multiple literacies. Identity accounts are representational accounts of speakers (writers) about some aspects of themselves, their reference points, subject positionings, and perceptions of sociolinguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Maguire, 2005). They provide understanding of multilingual children's textual representations of their worlds, constructions of their evaluative orientations towards multiple literacies, lived and imagined spaces. I begin with a letter from a four-year case study of a multilingual, Iranian child who moved to Canada, back to Iran and, then, back to Canada (Maguire, 1999).

The text in Figure 1 is an example of the types of data from multiple embedded case studies from several funded projects in which our multilingual research team used a reflexive, voice-centered methodology and multiple data sets to understand Heritage literacies (Maguire 2007). Data included audio tapes of all team meetings, observations in home, school, and community contexts, textual analysis of students' texts and textual resources used in home

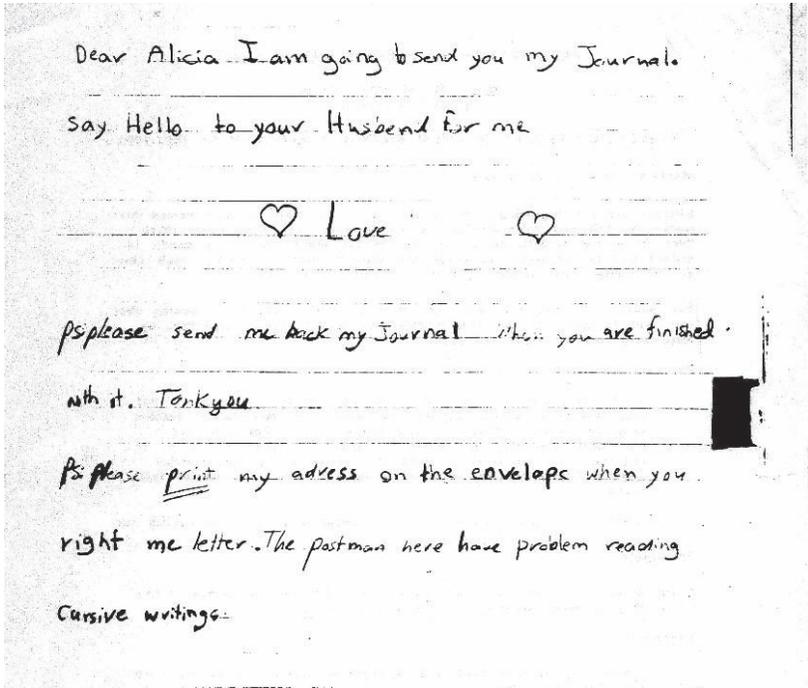


FIGURE 1

Heddie's letter From Iran

and heritage contexts, interviews with parents, teachers, students administrators, digital data, community archives, census data and visual evidence such as photos and children's representations, described elsewhere (Maguire, 2005a, 2005b). Heddie's acts of meaning in the letters she wrote to my Mexican American research assistant offer insights into how trilingual/multilingual children may construct the diverse worlds and literacy practices they notice, understand and name (Maguire, 1999).

The six lessons learned from other multilingual children's acts of meaning have implications for policy makers, educators and researchers in moving beyond mainstream literacies. Our team's diverse backgrounds, Armenian, Chinese, Czech, Greek, Japanese, Irish and Welsh, reflect a microcosm of the very phenomena we are trying to understand. (Maguire, 2005a, 2007). To examine the complexities of heritage language literacies in these contexts necessitates adopting recursive socio-cultural-historical perspectives, new methodologies and methods, using compelling theoretical frameworks and understanding multiple interacting spheres of influence such as socio-historical political discourses, power structures and ideologies. Heritage languages/literacies in

Montreal are embedded in a complex politics of recognition (Taylor 1994), local parapolitics (Geertz, 1983), immigration and Diaspora patterns. Parapolitics are those political processes that unfold outside of the formal procedures and channels of the state, particularly interactive state institutions such as schools. To examine the structural ambiguities and parapolitics of heritage language education in Montreal, I draw on human geographers Soja (1996) and Lefebvre's (1991) concept of third space and three types of spaces and Bakhtin's concepts of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse and ideological becoming as a theoretical lens (Maguire, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). These sensitizing concepts connect to Geertz's concept of parapolitics—the practices, strategies, and institutional activities whereby groups seek to gain control over educational institutions, curricular, discourse and sense of self.

For example, Bakhtin's dialogic theory (1981, 1986) assumes a fusion of languages and social worlds:

language for the individual consciousness lies on the borderline between one-self and another. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's own when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. (1981, pp. 293–294)

He distinguishes between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. *Authoritative discourse* refers to official discourses such as government policy and legislation, the discourse of traditions, generally acknowledged beliefs and voice of authority (Bill 101 in Quebec). *Internally persuasive discourse* refers to everyday discourse that constantly changes in social interactions—the discourse of personal beliefs, ideals and values that influence responses to the world and others. Lefebvre (1991) envisions three different types of spaces: *espace perçu* is the perceived space including the kinds of discursive and social practices that humans impose on their worlds such as speaking different languages. *Espace conçu*, a conceived space, is full of representations and mappings of material places. *Espace vécu* is a third space lived and experienced by its users including meanings, contexts and representations of particular places. I have documented how these theoretical frameworks offer insights into how multilingual children's dialogic selves form active responses to the discourses in their personal, social historical trajectories and temporal worlds (Maguire, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). Thus, adopting an historical perspective is the first lesson and entry point for understanding why some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others in particular contexts and eras.

Political Discourses and Rhetoric: Legislative Provisions Governing Language of Instruction

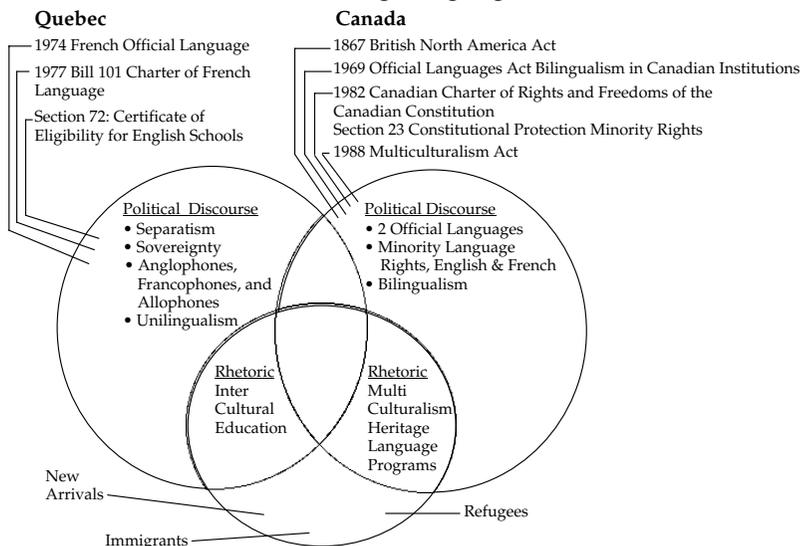


FIGURE 2

Political discourses and language policy rhetoric

Lesson 1: Understanding politics of locations, authoritative discourses of language education policy

Historically, Quebec legislation has had an impact on Quebec's ethnic minorities, their positioning within a structurally ambiguous system. Prior to 1960, little documentation exists that examines the development of multiple axes of diverse individual and collective identities with the communities themselves. History of language education policy and legislation in Quebec dates back to 1759. The British conquest of New France on the Plains of Abraham resulted in two charter groups, English and French, with rights and privileges, at least in theory, and especially with respect to areas of language and education. Language education in Quebec is embedded in complex public and private evolving school systems in which various pasts and futures shape the discursive materialities of language instruction, especially heritage languages within this linguistic duality. Figure 2 presents an overview of the nested contexts of political discourses that center on majority and minority language contexts within an English and French discourse of linguistic and cultural duality (Maguire, 1994).

In the new global economy, the different ways languages are perceived, valued and linked to particular market places, immigration policies and lan-

guage legislation in majority and minority language contexts are even more complex, thus defying a “one size fits all” one-dimensional approach. Heritage languages in Canada and Quebec are sustained and still evolving in different ways in particular contexts. In the English and French Quebec public schools, attempts to maintain heritage languages formally through programming initiatives PELO programs (Programmes d’enseignement des langues d’origine) evolved in the late seventies in both systems. In Montreal, heritage communities evolved through different strategies and organizational styles:

1. trilingual public school systems are partially subsidized by the Quebec Ministry of Education (Armenian, Greek, Jewish day schools in Montreal);
2. local community efforts through Saturday heritage language schools (e.g. Greek, Korean, Chinese, Urdu, Armenian, Ukrainian, Japanese Language Centre) are largely funded by local communities, or umbrella organizations;
3. local communities also adopted strategic responses to the needs of newcomers, immigrants and /or refugees in particular communities who assume the financial, cultural and linguistic maintenance of the schools (e.g. Japanese Hoshuko Saturday school for Japanese nationals residing temporarily in Montreal originally funded by the Japanese Shokokai business community);
4. local community ad hoc efforts occurred in more informal contexts such as Czech summer camps, heritage language teaching in community centers or religious spaces such as church basements or mosques.

Interestingly, three large diaspora communities, Armenian, Greek and Jewish, have their own trilingual school systems — certified and funded by the Quebec Ministry of Education. Why these school systems evolved, developed corporate like forms of educational systems visibly and linguistically marked spaces (*Espace perçu*) and why other ethnic communities such as Italians have different historical educational trajectories for maintaining heritage languages, cultures and traditions raise interesting questions about language ideologies, identity politics and parents’ educational choices and roles of community networks and umbrella organizations in the public discourses of schooling and literacy, especially non-mainstream literacies (Auerbach, n.d.).

Breton (1991) views ethnic communities as complex networks of intergroup relations, which take different forms during their ebbs and flow in the different spaces in which they find themselves and maintaining those regularities, routine patterns of literate actions that serve to reproduce neighborhood spaces and ways of living, real or imagined. Understanding the interplay among global, national, provincial politics and local parapolitics influencing

Quebec educational systems in general is critical for understanding the complex intercies of class, race, gender, culture, language religion and boundary crossing characteristics of these geographical spaces and whose literacies are recognized, privileged and valued. Despite dramatic increases in recent immigration and complex language backgrounds of young Montreal, ethnic/heritage communities evolved in different ways especially with respect to the varied responses to the authoritative discourses of federal and provincial legislation and regulatory policies, particularly those concerning language education and access to language instruction.

While scholars (Bailey and Schecter, 2003; Corson, 1999, 2001; Cummins, 1992, 1996; Genesee, 1994; Lamarre, 2003; Maguire, 1999; McAndrew, 2003; Taylor, 1994) have begun to document this “new” ethnic linguistic diversity as an established fact, the actual evolution of Montreal’s linguistic and cultural pluralism emerges from a century of immigration. Surprisingly, little documentation of heritage language literacies or their meanings exists, especially from the perspectives of heritage language speakers and writers themselves. One noteworthy example of the kind of excellent scholarship that needs to be done is Isobel Kaprielian-Churchill’s (2005) comprehensive historical, ethnographic account of the Armenian experience in Canada.

Lesson 2: Appreciating heritage literacies beyond mainstream literacies and languages

Multiliteracy development is deeply rooted in sociocultural, linguistic, historical and political processes (Maguire, 2005a; Brazel and Mannur, 2003; Hall, 1982). In the academic mainstream discourse on literacy, terms such as multiple literacies, multiliteracies, multimodal literacies, new literacy studies and multilingual literacies emerged (Kress, 2003; Street, 1995; Martin-Jones and Jones, 2005). However, reference to heritage literacies is strikingly absent in even these mainstream academic discourses especially with reference to different literacy scripts such as Chinese, Korean, Armenian, Greek, to name a few. Heritage literacies, sometimes referred to as community languages, involve a complex set of cross and intergenerational literacy practices that reflect the choices individuals and communities make about literacy practices and identity politics. Identity politics refers to the politics of group-based movements claiming to represent the interests of a particular group rather than policy issues to all members of a community (e.g. class, ethnicity, language, gender, religion). Heritage literacies are particular literacy practices, funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzales, 1992) that are evolving, recursive, multimodal and interlingual.

This cross- and inter-generational learning and meaning making usually, although not necessarily, occurs outside mainstream schools.

Take, for example, this dialogue journal entry (Figure 3) from a grade

Differentiating Language Systems

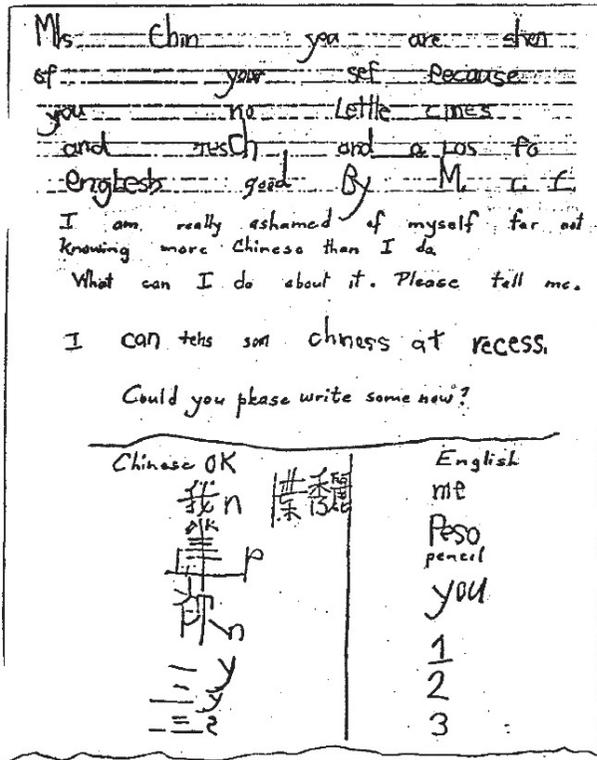


FIGURE 3

Differentiating language systems

one Chinese child in an urban Montreal school. The context for this text written on a Monday morning is a weekend visit to Montreal’s Chinatown. This six-year-old observed her Chinese–Jamaican teacher shopping and conversing in English to Chinese merchants. Surprised by her teacher’s interactions in a mainstream language, she chastises her for not knowing “more Chinese” and provides an informal, spontaneous lesson about differentiating between two different language systems and alphabetic systems. An important lesson here is that even modern conceptualizations of literacy as knowledge of letters challenges such limited definitions especially when considering language systems that are not based on mainstream alphabetical languages. While there exists a rich corpus of Canadian research in second language acquisition, focus has been largely on mainstream languages such as English and French. In 2009, many Montreal children are literate in non-mainstream languages, dialects and

alphabetical scripts in different contexts, spaces and places. Whose literacies are privileged in our academic conceptualizing of multiple literacies? In our classrooms and schools? This text reminds us that strikingly absent is reference to multialphabetical systems in non-mainstream languages in our major language education publications (e.g. Mandarin characters and Pinyin). It also raises the importance of appreciating the literacies occurring in school contexts and the literacies children may know and bring from home contexts, and the informal sociolinguistic exchanges occurring in every day activities in Montreal and the subtle slides or meanings that can emerge. Becoming bilingual, biliterate or multiliterate is a complex, dynamic, relational process that occurs in particular contexts (Maguire, 1994; 2005a).

Lesson 3: Understanding the complexities of multilingual children's representations within nested contexts of Montreal sociolinguistic landscapes

I have argued that the “coming together of diverse voices” in multiple languages, cultures and places offers multilingual children new possibilities and spaces for understanding their worlds and ever “new ways to mean” in their ideological becoming (Maguire and Curdt-Christiansen, 2007). Eight-year-old Sada reflects the complexities of multilingual children’s representational abilities and engagement with the world, self and others in the next text (Figure 4). Her representational abilities illustrate the complex web of intertwined dimensions of self-interacting in any linguistic act, utterance or social action, thus necessitating a contextualized situated perspective.

As multiliteracy and multimodal literacies became the new literacy discourses in the nineties (Kress, 2003), Sada’s text forced me to rethink the complexities of children’s textual representations and the different types of understanding social relations and discourses that are possible within a child’s textual literacy and representational endeavors. I view her text as a stunning example of a voice-centered relational approach that views children as embedded in a complex web of intimate, larger social relations and discourses and what Bakhtin calls sympathetic co-experiencing (Bakhtin, 1986; Maguire and Graves, 2001).

In 2009, this text illustrates multiple issues that can emerge as possible entry points into cultural dialogues. The first issues concern what Sada has appropriated, and which she is reifying or resisting in this text. We might engage the question: How do children and their significant others constitute the socio-cultural processes of literacy reproduction or literacy reconfiguration (Bourdieu, 1991)? The subjective and intersubjective nature of Sada’s literacy learning emerges in her representation of her self and her mother. She takes a social, evaluative stance towards her social worlds—the most immediate, which is her mother’s situation as a second language learner. Sada has clearly



FIGURE 4

Sadda's multiliterate and multimodal texts

internalized the indexical signs of modernist literacy practices, artifacts, and discourses of schools and classrooms. In the foreground of the drawing Sadda positions two different perspectives as she juxtaposes her mother's figure talk and voice with her own poetic text and voice. At the heart of this entry is her evocative plea addressed to her mother not to go to school at night. This poignant voice is sharply contrasted with her mother's voice and expressed delight at attending school, which Sadda represents in a dialogic bubble: "I'm so happy and excited. It is my first day". The surrounding drawings and texts combine to reveal Sadda's understanding of the semiotic resources and tools of school learning situations, which include a teacher, a blackboard, a school desk and chair, her mother's school bag and a sheet of paper. The entire scene is framed in a classroom located inside school whose access to the outside is by means of a downward staircase. Not only are the important artifacts and par-

ticipants included but their roles and subject positions as student and teacher, mother and daughter are explicitly delineated. Giving voice to multilingual children's perspectives on becoming and being multiterate requires a continual audit of the meanings of their contextual worlds where subtle shifts and slides of meaning occur, reoccur and even collide. The complexities of their representational abilities means looking beyond traditional evidence reported in mainstream research inquiries to consideration of the relationships between multiple literacy texts and their complex, intertwined intercontextualities in particular literacy situated practices (Maguire, 1994; Street, 1995).

Lesson 4: Looking beyond traditional evidence: Multimodal perspectives

Thus far, I have argued that children are sign and symbol makers who draw on the resources available to them in their specific socio-cultural-linguistic environments. Although scholars (Kress, 2003) have argued the importance of multimodal literacies, children's drawings are seldom utilized in academic mainstream articles about bilingual or multilingual children's biliterate/multiterate and representational abilities. Kress argues that a multimodal perspective assumes that meanings are constructed, distributed, received, interpreted and remade in interpretation through many representational communicative modes and not just through language (Kress, 2003). Kendrick et al. (2005) have illustrated that drawing as mode of representation can be a powerful, valuable tool for collecting information about children's conceptualizations and ideas about literacy. Kendrick et al. maintain "drawings offer insights into who the child is, including individual intentions, as well as cultural, societal and environmental conditions surrounding the making of the drawing" (p. 202). The next drawing, by a nine-year-old Armenian trilingual child, is useful in helping us understand the micropolitics of Montreal schools and in particular heritage language schools as literacy spaces and places within an urban school setting and provincial context where French is the official language. Pennycook (2001) argues "texts do not mean until they are interpreted" (p. 11). The intertextual elision between texts and contexts in this drawing supports Pennycook's argument that texts are embedded in complex sociohistorical relations. Accepting this assumption means looking beyond traditional evidence of linguistic proficiency found in mainstream inquiries and understanding children's acts of meaning in particular contexts.

In the colorful representation of the Armenian school she attends (Figure 5), this trilingual nine-year-old points to the nuanced subtleties in texts and contexts relationships that lie below the surface and intercies between macro and local politics. Two iconic symbols, the Armenian flag and a cross, are the identifying logo markers of this educational space, *espace perçu*. However, this Armenian child explained that she drew the French school down the street

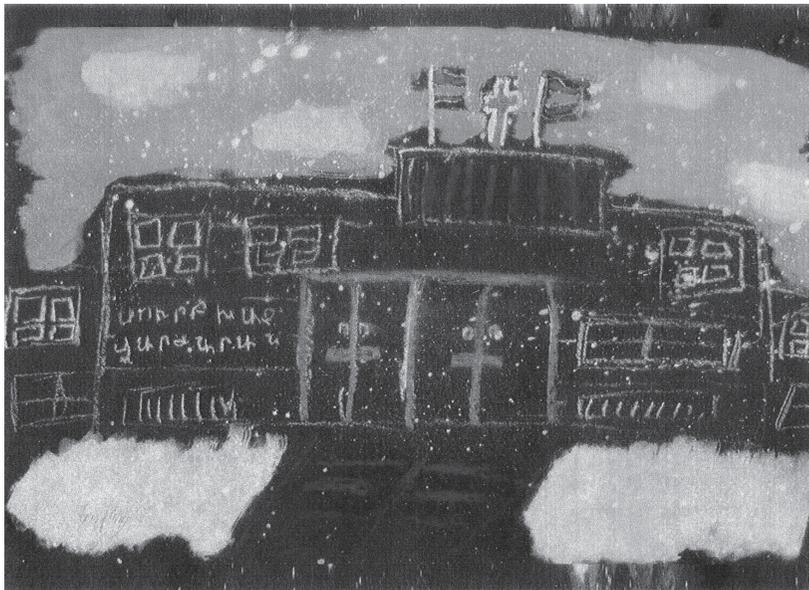


FIGURE 5

Drawing of Armenian school

in order to protect the “Armenian school’s real identity”. She writes the name of the school Holy Cross School in Western Armenian script in capitals on the building. Post-Bill 101, signage in urban Montreal raised interesting issues about multilingual literacy practices and indexicality in commercial activities and on institutional spaces such as schools. Many buildings shortened their logos to comply with Bill 101 signage laws. I have used ethnographic literacy activities in my courses that engage my students in looking at signage to show them how they might use signs as literacy practices in their own classrooms to help their own bilingual, trilingual or multilingual students assess and understand their own neighborhoods as literacy environments (Collins and Slembrouch, 2007), be they English, French or heritage language spaces. All schools have complex, changing histories and literacy practices, including how they name and identify themselves as *espace perçu*, that have evolved in formal and informal educational spaces over time.

Take, for example, the evolution of Armenian heritage schools in Montreal, which date back to informal settings in homes and church basements. Armenian educational and cultural initiatives can be traced as far back as 1906, when the American General Benevolent Union, a non-profit organization to promote and maintain Armenian heritage. Prior to 1975, Armenian schools were Saturday schools housed in church affiliated in informal settings, with

the earliest ones dating back to 1914. In 1957, St. Gregory Illuminator's Saturday school started in the basement of houses. In 1959–1960, the church split into the Cilicia and Echmiadzin sees. In 1975, a trilingual school system existed pre-Bill 101. Founded in 1959, the *École arménienne Sourp Hagop* is the largest of the three day schools, credited and funded by the Quebec Ministry of Education. With a school population of about 670–700 students, it offers Armenian heritage studies, French immersion and English as a second language. In 1974, a Chicago American billionaire developed the *École Alex Manoogian*. With a school population of about 250–300 students, it is advertised as a private school called the *École arménienne privée de langue française* (1978–1983). The Armenian community's churches, such as the Armenian Apostolic Church, schools and community centers, youth organizations play a major role in sustaining “the Armenian heritage” and helping its members integrate into new communities (Attarian, 2007; Kaprielian-Churchill, 2005).

Similarly, Konidaris (2005) documents the evolution of the first Greek school, “Platon”, that was founded in 1909. Organized as a day school in 1910, its eventual evolution into the present Greek trilingual schools system is directly linked to the evolution of the Hellenic community in Montreal also founded in 1909. In 1925, the Socrates Anglo School was established simultaneously with the purchase of Holy Trinity Church. In 1931 the Platon School incorporated itself with the Socrates Anglo-Greek-School. In 1971–1972, a marked teaching change from English to French occurred and focused on a trilingual program. In 1978, the school joined the then Montreal Catholic School Commission and since then has received government funding despite current debates about such funding. Socrates school has four campuses in Montreal, Roxboro, Laval and the South Shore, which operate pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten classes and independent day care centers. The dynamic Hellenic community offers a multiplicity of services to the Greek community including a Greek supplementary school. In 1981, the Aristotelis School was established exclusively for the graduates of the *École primaire Socrates*. In 1980, the Greek community operating under the Orthodox Church became a civil organization and renamed itself from the Hellenic Canadian Community of the Island of Montreal to the *Communauté hellénique de Montreal*, with a new emblem.

The Jewish parochial trilingual school system, which has one of the largest number of day schools in Montreal, dates back to the turn of the century, when a number of Jewish schools emerged that differed from each other in religious orientation, ideology and clientele. The first Talmud Torah School for boys was founded in 1896 with 20 students and by 1926 had 8 branches with over 1300 students. These schools are characterized as mainstream, orthodox schools with a religious orientation. In 1913, the Jewish secular school system was found by a coalition of socialist, Yiddish and labor Zionist groups who fa-

vored a civilization approach. In 1915, the Jewish Peretz School was founded and promoted a progressive orientation to education. By 1950, the United Talmud Torah, the Jewish People's school and the Jewish Peretz School formed the mainstream Jewish day school. Jewish day schools did not evolve according to community preference but because they could not fit within the Catholic and Protestant school systems. Community interest in developing Jewish community schools is directly linked to the community members' attempts to find a distinctive place. Rosenberg (1970) traces the evolution of the Jewish parochial systems and their ideological positionings.

However, despite increased attention by the Quebec government to inclusive pluralism and intercultural education, the evolution of heritage language programming did not only result from an increased sense of global interdependence and internationalism but historically from direct grassroots initiatives of different cultural groups at different times. The vitality of three different Diaspora communities with the largest trilingual school systems in Montreal, Greek, Jewish and Armenian can be attributed to their establishment of heritage language schools, well developed social networks, infrastructures of religious institutions and cultural associations and youth organizations. Ironically, they also emerged because their orthodox religious affiliations could not be accommodated within the then religious demarcated Catholic or Protestant, English or French public school systems. Also ironic in reflecting back on the evolution of these schools is that the debate focused not only on language and religion but the power of Church and State and what kind of educational system Quebec should have, who should control it, and who should pay for it (Rosenberg, 1970).

In 2009, while this debate about access, control and funding of public and private schools continues, one of the ironies of Bill 101 is the emergence of a generation of trilingual and multilingual children and youth in Montreal that scholars have only begun to document. The lessons to be learned from this seemingly innocent drawing/ text are the complex intersections between macro and micro politics and how their impact on children's positioning and sense of authorship in more than one language. In all the academic rhetoric about multiliteracies and multimodal literacies, there is a dearth of research into multilingual literacies and children's authorship in more than one language (Maguire, 2005a; Maguire et al., 2007).

Lesson 5: Understanding trilingual authorship

Critical Discourse theorist Ivanic (1998) argues that "writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves within socio-culturally shaped possibilities of selfhood, playing their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and interest which they embody" (p. 109). In 2001, I presented a multidimensional model of self interact-

ing in any linguistic act or utterance based on the discourses, texts and voices of three 8-year-old Muslim Iranian children over a three-year period in home and schools contexts described elsewhere (Maguire and Graves, 2001). More recently, inquiry into the construction of self emerging in the three Chinese girl's written texts in English, French and Chinese indicate that the girls take up the act of writing to index personal meanings and positionings that are at times similar and on other occasion quite different. Language and learning environments play complex intertwined roles in the construction of self that are at times quite obvious and other times less so if not elusive (Curdt-Christiansen and Maguire, 2007). Regardless of their positionings, the girls cannot be easily categorized or labeled nor do they use mainstream labels used in schools for naming students such as Allophones, immigrant, second language learners, or minority language students. Take, for example, the case of LingLing, one of the girls who explicitly claimed her authentic, engaged, volitional performances as an author in all three languages, English, Chinese and French. Her self-initiated comic series of Zaz and Zinette's adventures (Figure 6) are just one example of her textual endeavors in creating texts that disrupt the social order, reveal her aesthetic self and resourceful engagement with various art forms across and within three languages. This complex and resourceful boundary crossing challenges our abilities to make 'bounded summaries' of multilingual children's writing and representational abilities in each language and learning environments, be it home or school context and spaces. This requires a continual audit of meanings texts, and contexts from the perspectives of the authors themselves (Maguire, 1999).

This multimodal text and the others examined in this article provide some insights into how trilliterate and multiliterate children negotiate their discursive identities, create meanings from their daily, lived realities, *espace vécu* and create their own possibilities of self in writing in more than one language. Children can leave traces of their human consciousness in their texts, which in turn can offer glimpses into how they are developing their ideologies, positioning themselves and establishing their points of reference as they appropriate or resist the prevailing discourses (Brazier and Mannur 2003; Kearney, 1988; Hall, 1982).

Lesson 6: Appreciating multilingual children's articulated preferences and ideological affiliations

I believe that children can articulate their own ideological positionings that can be traced to their socialization, friendship patterns, language facilitations, experiences, family situations and access to particular schools (Maguire, 2005a). More recently, the identity accounts of a selected group of Chinese children who attend a Chinese heritage school in Montreal reveal some ideological patterns of alignments (Maguire et al., 2007). These children assert their own ide-



FIGURE 6

Comic "La génie Zaz et Zinette"

ological stances towards prevailing authoritative discourses, voice their own sense of agency and internally persuasive discourses, and tap into the ideological resources that mediate their access to different linguistic repertoires. Languages and ideologies, in the form of language assumptions, beliefs and representations are intertwined (Wollard, 1998) as illustrated in this textual account from a larger ethnographic inquiry into multilingual children's cultural positionings and identity politics in heritage language contexts and schools (Figure 7).

Schools as institutional material spaces, *espace vécu*, such as one of the largest Chinese Saturday schools, provide formal places for the transmission of knowledge about Chinese culture and traditions. However, many heritage Saturday schools rent locations where the environmental resources and facilities of regular schools may not be available. As material spaces with no identifying

Ideological Allegiance & Language Inheritance

亲爱的姥姥、姥爷，
你们好吗？我们从中国回来已经八个月了。我很想你们。

我现在在一个法语学校上学。每星期有法语课、音乐课、数学课、体育课、美术课、德育课，还有英语课。老师对我很好，我们班的同学来自许多国家，我交了好几个朋友。我的学校离我家很近，只有一公里远。一开始我乘校车去学校，后来我进入六年级就不可以乘校车了。爸爸每天早晨送我上学。妈妈不要想念我，我一定好好学习。

祝你们
身体健康！
外孙 辛欣敬上

Dear grandma and grandpa:

How are you? We have been back from China for eight months now; I miss you all very much.

I am now attending a French school. Every week I have class in French language arts, music, mathematics, physical education, arts, moral and English. The teacher treats me nicely. My classmates come from many different countries. I have made quite a few friends. My school is not far from my house, only one kilometre away. In the beginning I took the school bus to go to the school. When I entered the fourth grade, I am not eligible to take the bus anymore. Daddy takes me to school everyday.

Don't worry about me, I promise to study very hard.

Wish you
Healthy!
Grandson Xin-Xin with respect
(Zhonguo School Journal, MARCH 2001)

FIGURE 7

Chinese text

logos, they may or may not encourage a feeling of belonging and ownership and convey to some children that they are no more than temporary visitors one day a week to their heritage Saturday school. As *espace conçu*, they may serve a socializing location for Chinese children to interact with one another and can be re-imagined spaces with particular meanings, familiar sounds of language and memorable experiences with significant others. Children articulate their own positive evaluations of their multiple schools experiences and social networks in more than language and space (Maguire et al., 2007). The rapid rise in child-centered, participatory research activities with children in many countries pose new challenges and responsibilities to policy makers, educators and researchers especially in understanding of the multiliterate and multilingual identity politics, ideological positionings and frames of reference for children who learn, live, negotiate and use multiple languages in diverse cultural spaces (Maguire, 2005a). Thus, we need to appreciate multilingual children's articulated preferences and ideological affiliations as represented in their textual endeavors in more than one language and diverse contexts.

Reflective understandings: Implications for policy makers, educators and researchers

Montreal heritage language contexts, schools and communities have complex historical trajectories that continue to evolve and change. Some heritage languages are maintained by collective organizations and structures that take on a corporate form of a distinct school system such as the three largest trilingual public schools system, Jewish, Greek and Armenian I previously described. However, each system evolved in different ways, for different reasons and with different consequences. Unlike the Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities, the Italian community did not take any concerted actions to establish a trilingual public school system. Pre-1977, heritage language maintenance occurred largely through the PELO (Programmes d'enseignement des langues d'origine) that first served Italian and Portuguese speaking children. One of the ironies in parental choice of schooling during this period is that the largest group of Italians lived in francophone districts but their children largely attended English Catholic Schools. In the 70s, in certain districts in the city, 90% of the school population was Italian. These neighborhoods were largely referred to as particular geographic urban spaces as for example "Little Italy". Linguistic choices new immigrants made in the 50s and 60s shifted in the 70s. The Jewish and Greek children attended English Protestant schools. The Poles and Italians attended English Catholic schools. PELO programming initiatives in English and French public schools evolved in the seventies around 1974 through the initiatives of the Italians, Portuguese and Spanish communities. Laurier provides an interesting example of the inclusion of heritage languages in both mainstreams English and French public schools. In 2003–2004, Laurier demonstrated that the languages taught in PELO programs included Vietnamese, Tamil, Punjabi, Portuguese, Mandarin, Italian, Hindi, Hebrew, Greek, Spanish, Bengali, Creole, Cambodian, Arabic, Algonquin. The largest enrollments are in Italian, Spanish and Arabic classes. Becoming bilingual, biliterate or multiliterate is a complex, dynamic relational process in particular contexts.

Both formal and informal organizational educational organizational styles produced a new generation of trilinguals who are described as language-resilient, savvy and comfortable border crossers within and across diverse cultural communities. Thus, the identity politics within heritage language communities must be viewed as connected to the nuanced multidimensional workings of historical, institutional forces and political discourses that in turn influence what Bakhtin calls one's ideological becoming and heritage communities answerability to shifting political discourses and language ideologies in different places, spaces and locations. Greek trilingual young adults reflect different discursive positionings in these identity accounts (Konidaris and Maguire, 2007):

I wouldn't say that I work at it but I wouldn't say it's automatic either. I make

conscious decisions about my life. My reality is being able to live in three languages.
(Alexandra, Greek trilingual)

When I think about my home where I belong is not a simple matter. For me, home is a feeling . . . If I'm abroad on business or on vacation, I feel something special when I return home. I have this feeling when my plane arrives in Montreal and the same when we land in Athens. My allegiance is to both places and because that's where I'm comfortable, Since I know all three languages, I think that makes it possible.
(Tilemanhos, Greek trilingual)

They would tell us we came with one suitcase and a dream for a better life and because we heard that line a million times already, we we'd imitate them . . . basically all in good fun, of course! My parents came to Canada with very little in terms of financial security . . . but I think what save them was the fact that they were really, really hard workers. My father worked day shift and night shift as a cook in one restaurant and a waiter in another. On the other side, he was learning what he needed to learn to be an electrician. (Tilemanhos)

Less visible and sparsely documented are the identity accounts and inter-generational literacies of members from the Montreal Japanese community as illustrated in Yoshida's recent study of Japanese youth. In describing, the evolution of the Japanese Hoshuko School, an initiative of the Japanese business community in Montreal, she illustrates how the Sansei and Yonsie generations who have tended to intermarry may know very little about the diaspora experiences of Japanese immigrants and Japanese-born Canadians after World War II.

After the internment [during World War II] all Japanese wanted to do was to blend in. They didn't want to stick out at all, that's why they moved here to Montreal and to eastern Canada in general. It was easier to re-begin life again.
(Maguire et al., 2005, p. 162)

Unlike the public face and material spaces (*espace perçu*) of the Chinese, Armenians and Greek communities, there is no physically demarcated space or identifying log of "a Japanese community" in Montreal. Several small studies have been conducted by McGill Japanese graduate students document how the experiences of contemporary young Japanese in Montreal are quite different from those who experienced internment camps decades ago (Ishibashi, 1993; Iqbal, 2005; Yoshida, 2001).

Macro and micro politics influenced the evolution of heritage language initiatives in Quebec and strategies adopted by different ethnic communities in Montreal (e.g. Jewish Parochial day school system, now one of the largest government funded public school system in Montreal, traced back to the 1800s and is best documented by Rosenberg (1996) and Corcos (1997). Rosenberg (1970) argues that the constitutional confessional nature of Quebec's school system as Catholic or Protestant and its structural ambiguity before 1960 legitimated the creation of a private Jewish system such that Jewish schools eventually came

to be seen as equivalent to public schools. A result of the 1875 constitutional definition of schooling as confessional, no universal public school system in Montreal was open and accessible to all during much of the time of heavy Jewish immigration. While appreciation of these historical trajectories is important, equally significant is understanding the local parapolitics in different heritage language contexts.

In addition to the complexities and differences in the evolution of heritage languages in Montreal, the most striking lessons and understandings to be appreciated in 2009 are:

1. the ease with which these children, youth and young adults code switch, border cross among the languages and cultures with remarkable relative flexibility;
2. the self confidence and pride in their own trilingual, linguistic and cultural capital. Many create a third space for themselves that allows for strategic engagement in social interactions with others in real or imagined communities and transnational identities.

The children's and young Montrealer's perspectives confirm that they frequently reflect on their own sense of self, their insider and outsider status, their sense of belonging, race, gender, class, ethnicity. They code switch in complex patterns sometimes choosing to use French or English even in heritage language contexts. Their articulated preferences for their multiple schools reveal different patterns of ideological becoming (Maguire et al., 2007). Home studies reveal from the parents' perspectives that they understand that their children's identity and language affiliations are not bounded by them or simply inherited from them. However, many influential visible or invisible factors impinge on family attitudes and positionings: for example, parents' family history, educational and immigration experience inter and intra generational language practices however influence how children and youth choose and position themselves. Of concern to this author are the teachers' perspectives, which reveal that some teachers devalue the children's linguistic-socio-cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991). In some schools, teachers do not know about the students other weekly or daily literacy and language activities outside the regular school. In some cases, in the mainstream schools, teachers do not tap into students' multiliterate and multilingual frames of cultural references. Some Heritage language teachers feel marginalized and isolated and raise a host of questions about teacher education in heritage language schools.

Implications for policy makers

Policy makers, community leaders, teachers should more fully appreciate and draw on children's multilingual literacy potential and multiple language abilities (Canagarajah, 1999; Corson, 1999, 2001; Feuerverger, 1991; Hall, 1995;

Luke, 2003, Pennycook, 2001; Rampton, 1990; Yon, 2000). There is a need for increased funding for local Heritage Language initiatives in communities and public schools. There is also a need for increased dialogue among policy makers, schools, teachers, families and communities. Some challenges from our recent analysis of textbooks and textual resources in Heritage Language Schools revealed different ideological messages in textbooks and resources. There is a need for inquiries into how schools and resources represent the 'ideal' heritage language family (gender roles, generations, types of homes). What are the political social/religious ideologies being promoted in schools and textual resources? Who creates, pays for, approves and/or disseminates the textbooks? textual resources? As this generation of multilingual young people grows to adulthood, what "repositories" of memories will they keep and value or resist and discard? What loyalties will they retain or reject? What languages will they continue to speak, read, and write? How will they define their individual and collective identities? What will they define as their community? Communities?

A common theme in Canadian political discourse is that the Canadian social landscape is woven in a multicultural mosaic (Auerbach, n.d; Corson, 2001; Taylor, 1994). The portrait of Canada as a welcoming place for immigrants can be traced to different immigration waves political discourses and, legislation in different historical periods. Recognizing that the education of immigrant and minority youth in Canada is a complex matter reflecting the social heterogeneity and policy framework of the nation, it is especially complex within the nested contexts and historical evolution of Quebec's language and education policies, legislation, public discourses of schooling and language socialization, cultural identity politics of Allophone youth and immigrants' language and educational choices. Heritage schools and programs may be differentiated in a number of ways:

1. by their goals, pedagogical approaches, organizational styles, funding—private/public—by their status as officially accredited or not;
2. by their type (Saturday school or trilingual school);
3. by their size and population;
4. by their history and community immigration patterns and by their visibility or invisibility of presence and location.

Thus, Lefebvre's three concepts of space are useful theoretical constructs for understanding heritage spaces as *espace perçu*—physical, material space in clearly identified buildings with clear semiotic logos, *espace conçu*—imagined/real space in rented buildings and *espace vécu*—children's lived experiences and ideological becoming within these spaces. While schools may position children in particular social spaces so too children and their families

align and position themselves as they construct their own identities and reflexive 'projects of selfhood' (Ivanic, 1998). In 2009, we need to know ever more about how this generation "read the word and the world" (Friere and Macedo, 1987) and their multiple worlds. An interesting geographical starting space is urban Montreal:

Montreal is a good place when you, when you're new. You know because you're coming right away to live in Canada. I would say better come to Montreal because you'd find people from the same countries here, same cultures, same traditions, something like that because you won't see only Guyanese, You'd see several Guyanese here.

(Nick, from Bangladesh, 6th grade student in a multiethnic school)

Heritage literacies, past and present, involve a complex set of intergenerational, interlingual literacies, knowledge, beliefs and values. In 2009, there is a need to focus on several research issues. There are some obvious directions:

1. to critically re-examine the assumptions and interconnections between language policies at different levels and 'minority language' learners and their families' evaluative orientations towards family and official language policies;
2. to describe heritage school contexts, family language policies and textual resources and practices used for language maintenance and cultural expression in these contexts;
3. to understand the intertwined connections between education and language policies and children's and their families' language ideologies, cultural affiliations and evaluative orientations towards learning multiple languages, and to develop a Canadian perspective to the increased theoretical debate on multilingual, multimodal and multiple literacies from multilingual language learners' perspectives.

To accomplish this agenda necessitates adopting recursive socio-cultural historical and linguistic perspectives, using new methodologies and methods that are ecologically valid and that encourage the searching for compelling theoretical frameworks that have the explanatory coherence and power for understanding complex phenomena.

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